

Duxbury Clipper

## Radioactive Waste Returned to Town

By KEITH L. MARTIN

A load of trash from the Duxbury Transfer Station was sent back to the town this past weekend because it contained a small amount of radioactive material.

At Monday's selectmen's meeting, Town Manager Rocco Longo said that the incident occurred Saturday as

trucks tried to deliver their last load to the Seamass trash processing plant, but were told by officials there that the load had met the company's minimum standard for radioactive levels.

Fire Chief Kevin Nord said that a refused load is a common occurrence and when he

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contacted Seamass about the denial of the Duxbury load, they had three other rejected loads that weekend. He said that the town believes the source of the radioactive reading came from a number of smoke detectors that were discarded and contain an ionized chip in them.

Nord said that Seamass' minimum standard for radioactive material is .05 millirem and the returned load had a reading of .155 millirem. To put this in perspective, Nord told selectmen that an x-ray exposes a person to 500 millirem, so the trash in question contained what he called a "minute source."

Nord said that he did his own investigation into the matter and there is a plan to handle the trash load. The

state's department of health has technicians will be coming to town this week to give direction and help isolate the material in question.

"There is no health risk to the town," said Nord, indicating that the situation would be dealt with on Tuesday or Wednesday of this week.

Longo added that the town has talked about developing its own internal policy for future incidents, including increased public awareness for people to check their waste before delivering it to the transfer station.

Selectman Betsy Sullivan agreed with this strategy, saying that she wasn't sure how many people, herself included, knew that smoke detectors contained traces of radioactive material.